

# FAN-DANGO

A STORMY PETREL UNTO YE

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## SOME NOTES ON BOMB-DODGING

Harry Warner wonders if any of us are changing the courses of our lives in anticipation of an atomic catastrophe. It occurs to me that he, and perhaps others of you, may be interested in a synopsis of the protracted gabble Al Ashley and I underwent in this connection. We spent, I would judge, something like 30 hours of discussion on just this one subject a couple of months ago. About all we got out of it was a growing conviction that we might as well wait for the bang.

Survival of a group seems virtually impossible, or rather, impracticable. A survival cell or colony would have to be self-sufficient both now and after the catastrophe. This very quickly grows into an impossibility unless one is at the command of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Consider. Self-sufficiency now pretty much postulates some sort of productive corporation of our own. It might be a series of adjacent farms centered around some sort of food processing plant or plants (This was about our favorite idea, despite the fact that neither of us knows or cares anything about farming.) Some sort of manufacturing establishment might also be possible, but it must be remembered that self-sufficiency would require not only ownership or lease of the factory itself but control of the raw materials it consumed. And regardless of what we were trying to make, we would have to have distributive facilities---highway service, air line, railroad, ships, or something to haul our stuff to market. This would be prohibitively expensive to buy ready-made, and equally costly to build from scratch. In other words, the amount of money it would take to buy out some going concern and its surrounding small town would not be far from astronomical. And if we sought an unsettled spot and built our own town we'd confront even more insuperable difficulties. In the first place, it is rather unlikely that any worthwhile townsites are unsettled. And suppose we do locate something feasible in the way of an unsettled location, just how are we going to induce the government to build us a highway, or the Southern Pacific to throw in a spur line? The trend now is to tear up the branch railroads--as for example the Pacific Electric line from Baldwin Park to Covina, which has been dismantled within the past six months. And new highways are not easy to get, in light of the present jam on highway construction and replacement of present outmoded facilities.

And it is preposterous to attempt a survival colony without having it completely in the control of the would-be survivors. In the first place, there are many things that our colony would have to have which the ordinary town can do without quite well--many of these things costing a lot of money--and the whole community would just about have to be on a cooperative basis in order to handle these extra expenses, or even to get the town to vote for them. For example, we could not depend on Southern California Edison or some other utility company for our electric power. We'd have to have our own auxiliary power plant. (Or if we decide it is unfeasible to try to depend on electricity, we'd have to have a steam-plant--with large



fuel reserves--or something equally a white elephant during the pre-bomb period.) We'd have to have much more versatile shops than the typical small town needs, for if we were to keep our mechanised civilization for very long we'd have to be equipped to turn out spare and replacement parts for every machine we had. And this sort of thing is not done by Al Ashley with a coping saw in between cups of coffee. If we are to install all these machines, we are going to have to make them produce something so as not to bankrupt us during the pre-bomb period. And this kind of expansion tends to snowball. If we had 20 years to develop in, we'd be not unlikely to have developed our hideaway into a likely bomb target!

The population of our hypothetical hideaway would be not the least of our problems. What we'd need would be highly skilled men and women--doctors, dentists, nurses, machinists, mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, engineers, psychologists, printers, painters,....many of them specialists. Our population budget could afford to carry mighty few drones. (This incidentally automatically eliminates 90% of fandom. How many of you are really expert enough in some skill of genuine value to our colony to warrant your inclusion with us?) And it would not be the easiest thing in the world to induce the really desirable prospects to turn their backs on civilization as it were and head into the wilderness.

Of course it may be that Al Ashley and I were too strongly impressed when we read THE 25th HOUR and FINAL BLACKOUT, but we both tended to envision a stalemated war, with the combatants all so shattered as to lapse into petty feuds scrabbling among the ruins. (Ackerman suggested that it would be more likely that unbombed Costa Rica or Peru or Liberia or San Salvador or Ethiopia would send in relief expeditions to rescue the survivors if any and build up a world domain of their own--in such case probably having a little war of their own with any strongly organized survival group. And I was not entirely optimistic about our chances of gaining even a stalemate--remembering Pearl Harbor and its immediate consequences quite vividly.) But we both tended to feel that in the half-decade following the bomb, our survival colony would probably have to spend a goodly portion of its energy in fighting off more or less organized mobs of dispossessed and partially starving people. It is at least a contingency which should not be overlooked.

In this case, our colony would have to be armed, and armed well enough to fight off fairly strong remnants of the US Army. This indicates not only a good supply of modern automatic weapons and ammunition for them, but a colony site so situated as to lend itself well to defense and perhaps even a seige. To make successful use of these assets, we would have to go on a semi-military basis from the inception of the community--with at least the rudiments of permanent fortifications. (An interconnected chain of concrete machine gun and light cannon emplacements would be impregnable against anything less drastic than an attack by a well organized army which included both mechanised units and an air arm.) Universal military training for the colony is also indicated from the very beginning--not only practice in the use of our weapons, but a painstaking indoctrination of ruthlessness. I'm no Hitler or wouldbe Hitler, but I'm still realistic enough to see that we'd very likely have to slaughter off most of the survivors around us in order to keep them from being a millstone around our own necks to drag us down too. The good of the race would require race survival (us) in preference to individual survival (non-us).

Well,

Harry, you start setting down a few concrete figures as to the capital our colony would require, and start thinking about how we'd be able to



get enough people willing to throw in with us (after all, life with us during the pre-bomb period would be a sight more rugged than the life most Americans lead today), and figure out how far we'd be able to get with our nation-within-a-nation before some government, either state or federal, intervened and put a stop to it, and you'll agree with Al Ashley and I that the concept of a survival cell is way, way off in the realm of faery fantasy. It would be easy enough to write about one for ASTOUNDING (in fact, a novel about one would be a nice thing for old Jawn W. to publish), but try doing it in real life. Yeah, just try it.

One thing, though. If the United States Government felt the pressure of atomic threats strongly enough to organize survival cells here and there under government sponsorship, and with governmental financial aid, there is no question but that such projects could be made successful. As a matter of fact, I consider that the establishment of at least six scattered colonies is probably the most urgently important defense move the United States could possibly make, but imagine it# actually being done! Pluff! Why we are so complacent that we aren't even willing to name a provisional government in reserve to come into action in the even Washington is atomised!

---ooOoo---

But of course there is always the possibility of individual survival through foresight and planning. Early in our discussions, Al and I saw the impracticality of a colony. So, being basically selfish anyway, we proceeded to wrack our three brains (my one and his two) for possible bomb-dodging expedients. We must have discussed and explored at least fifty possibilities. And every single expedient that we could think of proved on fairly close examination to be out, absolutely out.

He and I are both rather highly urbanized in the economic sense. That is to say, the skills by which we make or could make a satisfactory living are skills which can come into play only in a fairly good-sized place. The tiny towns and hamlets are all right for men with capital. If you have the dough, you can go into any town of 2500 or less and go into some sort of business for yourself and make good at it. All you have to do is to know the ropes of that particular business, and to pick out something that is not already done to death in that town. Or you can, if you have the temperament and training, take your capital and sink it into a farm.

And if you did something like that, you'd be almost certain to survive the bomb--that is, unless the entire earth were made uninhabitable by radioactivity, or unless the little town you picked happened to catch a bad miss from some city somewhere.

But he and I have both grown up in small towns, and we both know from bitter experience what it is to try to work for wages in one. Not only are pay rates minute, but it is often very difficult to get a job at all, due to the provincial tendency for job openings to get filled by a native son, and due also to the paucity of job openings in a small town. Moreover, there is such a limit to what you can hire out to do. You can work in a garage or filling station, you can clerk in a store or a bank, you can hire out as a farm hand. In any of these cases, you're not likely to get more than \$30 or \$35 a week. If you happen to be a school teacher you can get a job, but it probably won't pay anything, and also you'll be at the mercy of the small-town and its sadistic tendency to meddle.

In short, every possible bomb dodging expedient we could think of was impossible for one of three reasons. (1) We did not have the capital to undertake it. (2) It would not actually protect us reasonably from the bomb (being too close to near



misses or else on a main highway which would be susceptible to follow-up bombing). (3) It was a satisfactory dodge against the bomb, but it entailed giving up anything remotely resembling the life we want---so much so that it made us prefer sitting in LA waiting for the big bang.

If any of you have any ideas on a bomb-dodging expedient that cannot be blown full of holes by one or more of those three objections, trot 'em out.

We did think of two semi-escapes from the bomb.

One was to assemble an escape kit. This, we felt, should be easily carried on the person and yet include weapons, tools, first aid kit, any medicines the would be escapee might need chronically, perhaps a spare pair of glasses, and a few packages of vegetable seeds. Oh yes, and a sewing kit and some reliable and inexhaustible means of making a fire, like an old fashioned flint and steel. The idea of the weapons was threefold: shooting of food, possible self-defense, and the possibility of taking by force what one might need for survival. (No, Harry, the post-bomb world will not be a pretty place--might as well realise it.) I suggest as weapons: some sort of belly gun and about a hundred rounds of ammunition for it---this gun to be of a standard enough calibre so that there'd be a chance of finding more ammunition for it, and to be worn in a shoulder holster or otherwise concealed; a long-barrelled 22 calibre target pistol worn in a hip holster, capable of firing long rifle or 22 special cartridges, and backed by up to 1000 rounds of ammunition, depending on the strength of the wearer. (This gun makes an excellent makeshift rifle, and would be used chiefly to shoot food.); and also worn on a hip holster a standard boy scout axe. This would not only be a rugged weapon, but is almost a kit of tools in itself. Other tools would definitely include a large, multi-bladed knife--perhaps other small odds and ends. A canteen would be nice to have. Well, go on from there; make your own list. We envision this escape kit to be something which is assembled for the purpose and kept where there is the most chance of getting it when the bombs start. (Neither of us has done more than just talk about it as yet.)

The other expedient is to familiarise ourselves with the roads leading out of town. I don't mean the main highways, which in the event of a panic are almost certain to be jammed deathtraps (just one good pileup would block the flow of a road carrying eight or ten times the traffic it was engineered for), but the side-roads and lanes. We spoke of studying all escape routes from the places we'd be most likely to be--with especial reference to dead-end streets and streets or roads so situated that one could drive cross-country parallel to them if they became blocked. The idea was to learn these roads by actually exploring them, Sunday by Sunday, until they were so familiar that a person would know just where each went and how far, and just where he was in relation to other roads. We figure that such knowledge might, just might, if coupled with a modicum of good luck, give a man a chance of getting far enough out of town in his car before he had to abandon it and continue on foot, that he might possibly be able to outrun the radiation.

But as far as locating a reasonably sound and practical bomb-dodging idea--we just couldn't do it. Why don't some of the rest of you try your hands at it? It is certainly a worthwhile piece of research--particularly the way the world seems to be trending.

---ooOoo---

As I concluded stencilling that last sentence, I was startled by a clatter of feet on the stairs, and an excited and disheveled Al Ashley burst into the room.



"I got it! I got it!" he shouted. "Why Al," I replied, "you mean that Everett...."

He looked hurt. "No," he said. "Well then, tell me, Al," I said, "tell me what has so jolted you from your habitual rut of slothful lethargy as to bring you bursting in here like this."

"I have figured out how to survive the bomb," he said. "Why Al," I said, "that's wonderful!"

"Yes," said Al Ashley, "they laughed when I sat down at the IQ test, but will they survive the bomb? Will they live to be 159 years old? Who do they think they are?" A frightening nimbus of Napoleonic grandeur glowed faintly about his brow.

"Calm yourself, Al," I said. "Compose yourself. Tell me about it, Al. How do you propose to escape the bomb?"

"It's really very simple," he said, relaxing.

"But the details, Al, the details!" "Why?" said Al Ashley, "I'll just surround Abby Lu with six feet of lead. In that way, after the bomb, she can go on working--unharmd by radiation."

"Why Al," I said, "this is really magnanimous and altruistic and chivalrous and all that, but what does it have to do with your surviving?"

"Don't be a dolt, Fran," he said in that superior way of his. "If Abby Lu is protected from radiation, my earning power will survive the bomb unimpaired."

"Oh," I said. There was a brief silence as the IQ of 194 turned inward upon itself, lost in self-admiration.

"But Al," I said, where do you propose to get all that lead?"

"Oh....." he shrugged.

"But the details, Al, the details!" "Well, I'll just shake it out," he said. "I have been figuring, and if I just shake out 10% of my own lead it will be plenty."

"But Al," I said, if you shake out all that lead you might find yourself getting a job!"

"Never fear," beamed Al Ashley, "there is no danger of that. I have considered it from every angle; I have checked and rechecked my findings. The only effect it can possibly have on me is to make my coffee set better--- more room."

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FAN-DANGO is the personalised, composed-on-the-stencil magazine of Francis T. Laney, published by him quarterly or less often for inclusion in the mailings of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Material not appearing under a byline may be assumed to have been written by the said Francis T. Laney. Bombs and other tokens of appreciation may be sent to him at 321 Union Ave., Los Angeles 43, California.



AN OPEN LETTER TO MISS JONNE EVANS.  
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You recently distributed a questionnaire dealing with a proposed fantasy club for the children of fans, a club centered around a fanzine "especially for children and containing suggestions of Fantasy for children of different age levels and reviews of some of the best stories and books".

I do not consider such a venture to be advisable.

In the first place, this whole idea flies directly in the face of accepted modern theory of education. The trend today is towards whole learning and away from part learning, an elimination of highly specialized, compartmentalized subjects, particularly in the elementary level. The modern child-centered school works on a basis of units rather than subjects, and during the following up of each of these units a great many subject areas are covered. For example, one frequent unit in first and second grades is the farm unit, particularly in urban schools where few of the children have any first hand knowledge of rural life. This farm unit may cover as much as two months, during which time the children will construct a model farm (art, manual training), read about farm life (reading), carry on farm transactions (arithmetic), sing songs about the farm (music), and so on. Just how does fantasy fit into this kind of a setup?

If, for the sake of argument, we grant for a moment that minutely subdivided subjects are educationally valid for elementary school children, can we honestly justify splitting fantasy away from general literature? During the two-thousand-plus years of modern civilization mankind has accumulated a stock of reading matter which has survival value, which is as readable today as when it was first written. Since imagination is an integral component of creative writing, there is naturally a certain amount of fantasy included. But I doubt if as much as 5% of all fantasy can by any stretch of the imagination lay claim to literary survival value. For the adult who is perhaps ennuied with the more conventional fiction, or who wants sugar-coated pseudo-science, or who wants something to daydream about; the reading and collecting of fantasy is as sensible as most other hobbies. But is it wise to take children in their formative years and smother them in fantastic pap? The end result of such a process, if carried to the ultimate extreme, is someone like Ackerman, an intelligent individual who has let himself become so swaddled in fantasy that he neither knows nor cares anything about much of anything else. Can intensive specialization lead to anything else but this sort of narrowness?

My third objection to your program arises from considering the answers to this question: "What will become of my children if they are exposed to intensive fantastic propaganda?" If the indoctrination fails to take root, they will have wasted a considerable amount of time which they could otherwise presumably have used in worthwhile self-development. If the children's fantasy club and its magazine makes fantasy addicts of my children, where in the world can they find a niche? In fandom? When I consider the infinite potentialities of Sandy and Quiggie, or of the Burbee kids, or of any other reasonably bright, reasonably healthy children; I would regard it as a major tragedy if they were to be sidetracked into the backwater of neurosis and perversion that constitutes fandom. Better to try to keep them from making some of the worst mistakes of their parents. At worst, they will just make mistakes of their own, but is



it justifiable for us to try to ram our own mistakes down their throats?

One last point. Children's literature is so shot through with fantasy anyway that the deliberate seeking out of the genre seems rather needless. It looks to me as though the energy your proposed project would require might better be channelled in some other direction; it certainly should not be difficult to find something in the way of children's work that would be worthwhile.

Anyway, for the reasons cited, I do not want my children, Sandy and Quiggie, to have any part whatever in any fantasy group.

Sincerely yours,

*Francis T. Laney*  
Francis T. Laney

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.....When the meeting commenced, E. Everett Evans was sitting there benignly, Loving All Fans---or at least thinking about loving them. When we so pointedly attacked his protoje, Everett roused from his lethargy, his maternal instincts all atwitter, and leaped to the defense of his young co-worker. Feathers ruffled and voice cackling, he acted remarkably like an old mother hen doing battle for the life of her favorite egg. The anvil chorus from Burbee and Laney redoubled. With a wellnigh schizophrenic change in manner, Everett became almost frighteningly masculine. His screaming voice filled the clubroom as he publicly lost his pose of saintly patience and called Laney a bastard.....

Like it?

That is an excerpt from the MEMOIRS OF F. T. LANEY, a booklength narrative of four years in fandom. Pulling punches and suppressing names only now and then to avert possible libel actions, I have set down a candid and factual account of fandom as seen through my eyes. It is all there: The Acolyte, van Vogt, Craig Rice, Leder, Clark Ashton Smith, Derleth, Rimel, Baldwin--and of course, the dear old LASFS.

There has been no attempt to whitewash anyone, neither has there been any effort to malign. There have been two criteria for choosing material: (1) Did this actually happen? and (2) Is it interesting? I regret as much as anyone else that the book is largely derogatory; however, I waive any responsibility for the way fans act, and would like to point out that the surest way to avoid embarrassing revelations is not to do anything embarrassing.

This is a book that no fan can afford to miss. (Gosh, no, I might have mentioned you!) If you are the serious fantasiste type, you'll find page after page of otherwise unobtainable source material on some of the greatest fantasy figures of today, to say nothing of a considerable amount of discussion of the philosophy of fantasy and collecting reminiscences. If you are more the fan type--well, here is the lowdown on the LASFS, complete and unvarnished.

Right now it is all stencilled--132 pages, just under 80,000 words. I should get it mimeographed before year's end. So earmark \$1.50 for the biggest one-man fun project yet.



THE OFFICIAL EDITOR SITUATION, or, HOW TO GET THE MAILINGS OUT.  
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I was speaking recently with one of my fellow FAPA members, a man who is chiefly known for his successful invention of a mythical fan which he has made so plausible that some actually believe it to exist. Charles Edward Burbee II, who has out of whole cloth concocted the Ashley myth (which holds that there is a weird fellow with unbelievable ideas named Al Ashley) showed that he was something more than a mere concocter of bogey-men when he spoke to me with his mouth and said,

"Towner, how about the official editor of FAPA?"

"How

about it, indeed?" I said.

"Well, Towner, I've been thinking, and I can see no valid reason why the mailings should not come out right on time. I could do it myself very easily; while I was resting, as it were, from laboring over my godlike activities in the creation of Al Ashley, coffee-steeped and torpid, from the rib of Lora Crozetti, an electronic relay, and some other unmentionables. Why Towner, for a man of my capabilities it would be a mere nothing."

"You'll come to your senses," I said, trying to edge away from him.

"Since the editorship is so obviously a one man job," he said, ignoring my interruption, "why don't you and I file as co-official editors?"

"A one-man job---then two of us probably won't be enough."

"Hmmm. Well in that case, Towner, let's set up a corporation, and file jointly."

---ooOoo---

And that is just what we did. "AMALGAMATION" for official editor. Be sure to mark your ballots that way, friends. Remember, "AMALGAMATION" for efficiency. "AMALGAMATION" for neat FA's. "AMALGAMATION" for courteous service. "AMALGAMATION" for PROMPT MAILINGS!

"AMALGAMATION" consists of Al Ashley, Andy Anderson, Forry Ackerman, Chas. Burbee, Fran Laney, Gus Willmorth, and Elmer Perdue. VOTE FOR US. Remember the name, "AMALGAMATION".

---ooOoo---

The die is cast. No use weeping over spilled milk, but I've begun to have misgivings. In the first place, with seven official editors, the official organ will take on gigantic proportions, what with inter-office correspondence, reports from each official editor to each other official editor; to say nothing of the grand climax, the panel of editors delivering their joint report to FAPA.

The only way I can see around this dilemma is for the official editors to have a mailing of their own, the official editors' mailing. But this implies we would have to have an editors' editor.

Frustration.

Is there anyone in FAPA who can get a mailing out on time?

Step forward, chum. Only you can save us.